

## **Township of Middletown - Personnel Policies and Procedures**

### **Section 2 – Work Place Policies**

#### **2.15 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

In Middletown Township, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world.

However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

This policy applies to all employees or contractors who work for Middletown Township.

#### **Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Middletown Township, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in the Township's policies and procedures with regard to employee conduct on the job apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online.

Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects other people who work on behalf of Middletown Township, the public, or the Township's legitimate interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### **Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read these guidelines and the Middletown Township Policies and Procedures and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

#### **Be respectful**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, the public, vendors or people who work on behalf of the Township. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by

speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Grievance Procedures or Open Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet.

Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage members of the public, employees of the Township or vendors, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

### **Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Middletown Township, fellow employees, members of the public, vendors, or other people working on behalf of the Township.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

- Maintain the confidentiality of Township trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trades secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to the Middletown Township website without identifying yourself as a Township employee.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for Middletown Township. If the Township is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the Township, fellow employees, vendors or people working on behalf of Middletown Township.
- If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with Middletown Township, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Township. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Middletown Township."

### **Using social media at work**

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent Township policy on internet usage.

Do not use Township email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

### **Retaliation is prohibited**

Middletown Township prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against

another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**Media contacts**

Employees are not authorized to speak to the media on the Township's behalf without contacting the either the Public Information Officer or Township Administration and obtaining permission. All media inquiries should be directed to the Public Information Officer and/or Township Administration. If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact Township Administration.